United Nations A/53/1006

General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 July 1999

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 30
United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Letter dated 1 July 1999 from the Chairman of the Second Committee addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour, pursuant to your decision dated 14 April 1999 to appoint the Chairman of the Second Committee of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly as Coordinator of the open-ended informal consultations on the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements (A/53/463), to forward for your information and further action by the General Assembly the draft resolution entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements" (see annex), which was approved by consensus on 28 June 1999.

I would appreciate it very much if you could have this letter and its annex circulated under agenda item 30 of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

Bagher **Asadi**
Ambassador
Chairman of the Second Committee
Coordinator of the open-ended
informal consultations on the
report of the Secretary-General on
environment and human settlements

99-19786 (E) 080799

Annex

Draft resolution

Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/12 A of 12 November 1997, entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform",

Reaffirming its determination to strengthen the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations, including in the field of environment and human settlements, and thus improve its performance in order to realize the full potential of the Organization,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements[a] and the report of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements,[b] which contain recommendations on reforming and strengthening the activities of the United Nations in the field of environment and human settlements,

Expressing its appreciation to the Chairman and members of the Task Force for their commendable work,

Conscious of the continued deterioration of the global environment and the state of human settlements despite some positive achievements, as well as of the need to strengthen the institutions of the United Nations charged with responsibility for environment and human settlements, to improve their performance, and to promote coordination in the implementation of the environmental and human settlements dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system,

Emphasizing the importance of strengthening the capacity of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in their Nairobi location, and of ensuring the provision of requisite support and stable, adequate and predictable financial resources necessary to both organizations for the fulfilment of their mandates as contained in General Assembly resolutions 2997/XXVII and 32/162, as well as in the Nairobi Declaration of 1997 and the Istanbul Declaration of 1996, including by seeking additional financial resources through broadening the range of sources of funding for both organizations, in accordance with the financial rules and regulations of the United Nations,

Taking into account the views of member States on the report of the Secretary-General on Environment and Human Settlements,

Also taking into account the views contained in decision 20/17 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme and resolution 17/6 of the Commission on Human Settlements concerning the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements,

1. *Welcomes* the efforts undertaken to strengthen the United Nations in the field of environment and human settlements, and in that context takes note of the general thrust of recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements, proposing actions to be taken by the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Executive Director of the

[a] A/53/463.

[b] A/53/463, annex.

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, and also notes the recommendations outlined in section IV of the report;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations Office at Nairobi, in its capacity as currently the only United Nations headquarters located in a developing country, through the provision of requisite support and stable, adequate and predictable financial resources, including by proposing additional regular budget resources as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 52/220 for the consideration of the General Assembly, with due regard for proper United Nations budgetary procedures;

3. *Encourages* the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi to take steps to increase the level of utilization of the Office, and in this regard encourages other agencies, funds and programmes to consider increasing their utilization of its facilities for their activities;

4. *Calls on* the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements to increase their cooperation and strengthen coordination among their activities, within the framework of their respective mandates and separate programmatic and organizational identities, as well as their separate Executive Directors;

5. *Supports* the proposal of the Secretary-General regarding the establishment of an environmental management group for the purpose of enhancing inter-agency coordination in the field of environment and human settlements, and requests the Secretary-General to develop, in consultation with the Member States and members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the mandate, terms of reference, appropriate criteria for membership and the flexible and cost-effective working methods of the proposed environmental management group, and submit them to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session for consideration;

6. *Welcomes* the proposal to institute an annual ministerial-level, global environmental forum, that regular biennial sessions of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council would constitute that forum in the years that it meets, and that in alternate years the forum should take the form of the special session of the Governing Council meeting, in which participants can gather to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment, with due consideration for the need to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the governance mechanisms of the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as possible financial implications and the need to maintain the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development as the main forum for high-level policy debate on sustainable development;

7. *Supports* the proposals for the facilitation and support, including by the United Nations Environment Programme, towards enhancing linkages and coordination within and among environmental and environment-related conventions, with full respect for the status of the respective convention secretariats and the autonomous decision-making prerogatives of the conferences of the parties of the conventions concerned, and emphasizes in this regard the need to provide the United Nations Environment Programme with the adequate resources to perform this task;

8. *Welcomes* the proposals for the involvement, participation and constructive engagement of major groups active in the field of environment and human settlements, with due consideration for the relevant rules, regulations and procedures of the United Nations;

9. *Reiterates* the importance of strengthening the capacity and capability of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, within the framework of their existing mandates, in the areas of information, the monitoring and assessment of global and regional environmental and human settlements

trends and early warning information on threats, so as to catalyse and promote international cooperation and action, and in this context emphasizes the importance of strengthening the system-wide Earthwatch as an effective, accessible and strictly non-political science-based system;

10. *Reaffirms* that in accordance with its mandate, the United Nations Environment Programme should not become involved in conflict identification, prevention or resolution;

11. *Stresses* the need to ensure that capacity-building and technical assistance, particularly with respect to institutional strengthening in developing countries, as well as research and scientific studies, in the field of environment and human settlements, must remain important components of the work programmes of both the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, within their existing mandates, and also stresses in this regard the need for adequate financial resources as well as the need to avoid duplication of efforts;

12. *Also stresses* the need to further enhance the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as an implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility, consistent with its role as defined in the instrument for the establishment of the restructured Global Environment Facility;

13. *Reaffirms* the role of the Commission on Human Settlements in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, emphasizes the need for it to take steps to prepare for the review of its implementation in 2001, and welcomes the proposals that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements should strengthen its core activities and develop into a centre for excellence for human settlements;

14. *Welcomes* the proposal to continue ongoing work on the development of indicators in the field of environment and human settlements, and in this regard stresses the importance of the need to avoid duplication of efforts;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.